

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received MAR 24 1980

date entered JUL 24 1980

## 1. Name

historic COVERED BRIDGES OF BRADFORD, SULLIVAN AND LYCOMING COUNTIES

and/or common *Thematic Resources*

## 2. Location

street & number

not for publication

city, town

vicinity of

congressional district

10/11/17

state Pennsylvania

code 42

Bradford/Sullivan  
county /Lycoming

code 015/113/081

## 3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> thematic	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Multiple

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bradford/Sullivan/Lycoming County Courthouses

street & number

city, town Towanda/Laporte/Williamsport

state Pennsylvania

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Pennsylvania Inventory  
of Historic Places

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

date 1976

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

city, town Harrisburg

state Pennsylvania

## 7. Description

**Condition**☐ excellent☒ good☐ fair☐ deteriorated☐ ruins☐ unexposed**Check one**☐ unaltered☒ altered**Check one**☒ original site☐ moved date \_\_\_\_\_**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

There are seven remaining covered bridges in the counties of Bradford, Sullivan and Lycoming.

Bridge	County	Truss	Year	Length
Knapp's	Bradford	Burr	1853	95'
Forksville	Sullivan	Burr	1850	146'
Hillsgrove*	Sullivan	Burr	c.1850	171'
Sonestown	Sullivan	Burr	c.1850	99'
Buttonwood	Lycoming	Burr	1898	63'6"
Cogan House	Lycoming	Burr	1877	93'
Lairdsville	Lycoming	Burr	1888	77'10"

\*Listed on NR  
on 7-2-73

All burr arch trusses, the seven bridges range from 63'6" to 171'. A variety of siding, flooring, portal types make comparison on a regional basis difficult. It is also hard to compare the small number remaining with once present in the three counties. However, the remaining bridges are fine examples of the wooden bridge in Pennsylvania.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Located in the Susquehanna River watershed, these north central Pennsylvania Counties have never been heavily populated with agriculture and lumbering the most important economic basis today, as well as in the past. The use of lumber as a building resource was not only evident in their bridges but their buildings as well. While never rich in the number of covered bridges historically, there is significant difference between what was present 75 years ago and what is present today.

In 1890, Sullivan County had 30 covered bridges, today they only have 3. Bradford County had a least two with the possibility of many others not recorded, today only one remains. This remaining bridge is the highest-above-water covered bridge in Pennsylvania. Lycoming also has been reduced in number to only three.

These remaining examples of the covered bridge are an important link and record of the transportation histories in each county.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

County Bridge Records  
PHMC Survey of Pennsylvania Covered Bridges  
Allen, Richard S. Covered Bridges of the Middle Atlantic States  
Brattleboro, VT: Stephen Greene Press, 1959, p. 61-72.

## 10. Geographical Data **UTM NOT VERIFIED**

Acreeage of nominated property .49 **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**  
Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_ Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References See Continuation Sheet

A 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

  
Zone Easting Northing

B 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

  
Zone Easting Northing

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Verbal boundary description is calculated by adding 20 feet to each length and 10 feet to each width to include the abutments.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan M. Zacher

organization PHMC

date

street & number P. O. Box 1026

telephone 717-787-4363

city or town Harrisburg

state PA 17120

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ state X local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

ED WEINTRAUB, Director

title Office of Historic Preservation

date 3/10/80

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Carol Aubie

date

date

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAR 24 1980

JUL 24 1980

DATE ENTERED

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Covered Bridges of Bradford, Sullivan and Lycoming Counties  
Bradford, Sullivan, Lycoming Counties

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

The covered bridge is an important and significant historic structure in the Commonwealth of Pa. Not only does Pa. have the most extant covered bridges today, it probably had the most during the height of the covered bridge period 1830 to 1875. Estimates have been made that Pa. once had at least 1500 covered bridges. (Allen, 1959: 51). Not only is the sheer number important but Pa. had the first known U.S. covered bridge, as well as the prototypes for most of the major truss types.

The first US covered bridge was located in Philadelphia over the Schuylkill, built in 1800 by Timothy Palmer, a master carpenter from Newburyport, Massachusetts. From the completion of this first bridge, the age of the covered bridge was upon Pa. Not only was the truss types of Burr and others first tried out in Pa. but the covered bridge spread as the local carpenter adapted it to the local problem of crossing the numerous small streams and creeks throughout Pa. The covered bridge is also important in the history of bridge building. The early stone arch bridges were really only practical on smaller streams and then in areas with an abundance of good building stone. The peak of the stone bridge in Pa. can be seen in the Rockville Bridge over the Susquehanna River built by the Pa. Railroad and contains a quarter of a million tons of stone. The covered bridge was the transition from the stone to the cast-iron in most places.

Since the heyday of the covered bridge they have been rapidly disappearing through neglect, flood, arson and progress. Prior to the Agnes Flood of 1972, Pa. had 271 covered bridges, spread across 41 of its 67 counties. Since that time the number has been decreasing at a fast rate. Because of their importance, the state level National Register Review Committee as well as the Office of Historic Preservation have embarked on a covered bridge survey and registration project. A survey form and inquiry letter were developed and mailed to county bridge engineers, historical societies, members of the Society of Industrial Archaeologists, the Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Society and numerous others. To date we have information on approx. 3/4 of the 41 counties containing covered bridges. Our results to date show that the number of covered bridges is down about a third from the 1972 figure of 271. Just since beginning our survey, two bridges have been destroyed by arson and one by an overloaded truck. It is because of

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAR 24 1980

JUL 24 1980

DATE ENTERED

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Covered Bridges of Bradford, Sullivan and Lycoming Counties  
Bradford, Sullivan, Lycoming Counties

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

this rapid disappearance rate, as well as their significance to Pa. in the history of transportation that we intend to nominate as many as possible to the National Register of Historic Places. Because of time and the immensity of the task a thematic nomination covering the whole state is impossible. We are therefore nominating these structures on a county or two county basis. All bridges constructed after 1930 have been excluded unless the bridge has a significance of its own. Bridge construction dates and builders are not always readily available, therefore after exhausting the files of the bridge engineers, historical societies and the archives, we have been lenient with the bridges for which we could find no dates, mainly on the view that very few have been built in the last 50 years and that the registration of all of these fast disappearing resource is valuable. Moved structures have been included in our nominations for several reasons; firstly in all cases if these structures had not been moved they would have been destroyed, secondly they still retain their significance as examples of trussing types and while they have lost their location they still retain an integrity of location in a rural setting. Therefore we have tended to nominate every eligible covered bridge in each county.